

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



A Publication of the Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch

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Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

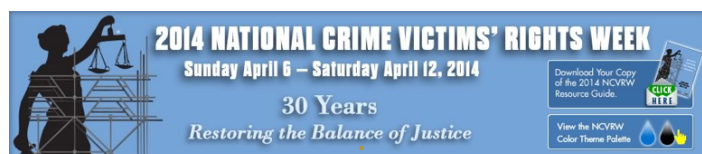
This year marks the 30th anniversary of celebrating victim services. The 2014 theme "Restoring the Balance of Justice" emphasizes the equal rights that victims have to a comprehensive responsive criminal justice system. It highlights those basic liberties that are afford-

ed which advocate, support and educate victims of crime. Through equality of opportunity the Victim Services Branch personifies those liberties for all victims. Regardless of personal attributes, each survivor is provided strength, objectivity, and support. We ultimately empower victims to take an

active role in the process. Let's continue the process of gaining access to the justice system through the work of the Victim Services Branch. We are restoring the balance of justice for victims. We are here for you.

Upcoming Events and Activities

April



National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) is celebrated April every year, and this year will be observed April 6-12, 2014, and the theme is "30 Years: Restoring the Balance of Justice. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) supports communities throughout the United States in their annual recognition of the (NCVRW) by promoting the rights of victims and honoring crime victims and their advocates. OVC is devoted to advance the Nation's ability to assist victims of crime and to offer leadership in variable attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime. OVC works with national, international, state, military, and tribal victim assistance and criminal justice agencies, as well as other professional organizations, to promote fundamental rights and comprehensive services for crime victims

For more information contact
Phone: 202-307-5983
<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw>

Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)

The National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) is a founding partner of the National Youth Violence Prevention Campaign which is April 7-11, 2014. The goal of its campaign is to raise awareness and to educate students, teachers, school administrators, counselors, school resource officers, school staff, parents, and the public on effective ways to prevent or reduce youth violence. The national education initiative will comprise of activities that demonstrate the positive role young people have in making their school and communities safer.

For more information contact:
Toll Free: (866) 343-SAVE or infor@nationalsave.org



June

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (IDICVA)

On June 4, 2014, the United Nations' (UN) International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression is observed to acknowledge the suffering endured by children throughout the world. This day emphasizes the global commitment to protect the rights of children.



For information contact:
(202) 331-8670
unicdc@unic.org
<http://www.un.org/en/events/childvictimday/>

—Florence Akurut (Intern)

Next-of-Kin: Restoring the Balance of Justice

The Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch (VSB) joins the nation in restoring the balance of justice to family members of homicide victims.

In 2006, Victim Services Branch-Family Liaison Specialists Unit expanded its services by organizing the Department's Next-of-Kin meetings.

These meetings connect



survivors of open homicide cases with the assigned homicide detectives. The detectives

update families and gather information that may help to solve the cases. To date, VSB has organized 23 meetings attended by over 1000 families. The Next of Kin Meetings will be held: in April 7-12, July and October, 2014.

For additional information contact **Carla Okonkwo** at (202) 645-6363 or **Tyria Fields** at (202)724-4339 of the Victim Services Branch.

—Megan Riley

Candle Light Vigils Play Crucial Role in Healing Process

Following the homicide of a loved one, candlelight vigils serve both practical and emotional purposes. These powerful ceremonies provide an opportunity for family, friends, and the community to remember and give tribute to the memory of the deceased. Candlelight vigils may be formal or informal and may include poems, prayers, singing, or speakers depending on the fam-

ily's wishes. Though vigils are sometimes attended by media, political, and religious officials, these ceremonies are also attended by law enforcement. The police's presence is not required, but may be beneficial to the investigation and ensure the safety of those in attendance. If present, detectives will distribute reward posters with the decedent's picture to promote awareness and encourage the community to provide information to help with the investigation.

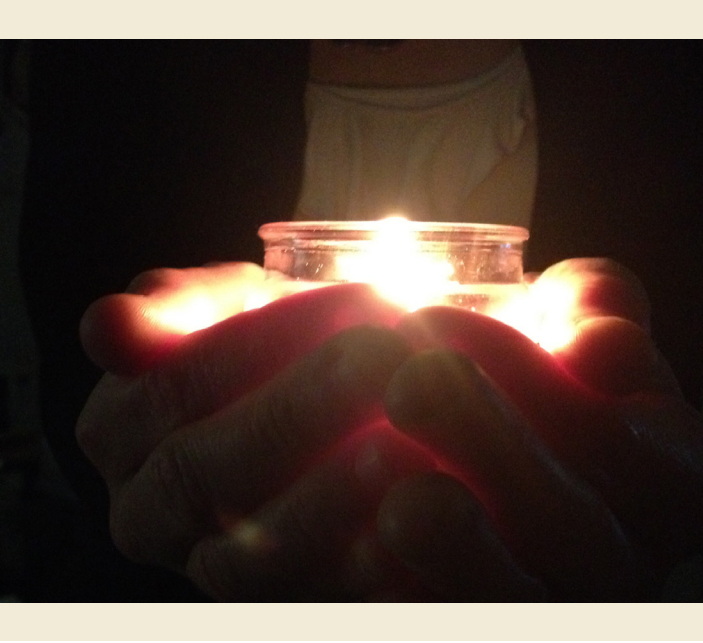
Everyone grieves differently and there are many ways families may choose to honor their loved one. Holding a candlelight vigil is just one example of a ritual that can provide a source of comfort and hope during the healing process. For families who wish to have a candlelight vigil, there is assistance available through the Lights of Hope Candle Light Vigil Program at the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing. In addition to supplies and programs for the vigil, Lights of Hope provides trained facilitators and/or crisis responders to assist survivors in



planning and facilitating the ceremony as well as on site support.'

If you would like more information about the Lights of Hope Candle Light Vigil Program, contact Ms. **Kecia Hill** at (202) 204-5025.

Submitted by Megan Riley



Major Case Homicide: Coping with No New Leads

Being a relative or friend of a homicide victim is a traumatic event. Often times, knowing that the case remains open/unsolved causes a tremendous amount of anxiety, anger, fear, disappointment, and other emotional and physical reactions. The unknown provides no peace for secondary victims of homicide of unsolved cases. And the experience of losing a loved one in unexplained circumstances remains difficult.

The question becomes: How do I cope with knowing there is "no new leads"? Self-Care is very important. There are av-

enues that one could embark upon to help refresh, replenish, and motivate themselves toward a means for healing. Communicating with a trusted friend, counselor, or minister is another tool that is extremely helpful. Getting the proper rest, sleep, exercise, and physical activity proves beneficial.

The Major Case Victim Specialists from the Metropolitan Police Department will be available to support you through this process and help you cope with your concerns and even frustration with the criminal justice system. The Major Case Victim Specialists will help guide through the

complexities and often times overwhelming judicial system. Further they will offer referrals to appropriate community resources as needed.

If you would like to obtain further information or to request services please contact the Major Case Victims Unit (202) 724-4339. Anyone with information concerning any of the Unsolved Cases is asked to call MPD Law Enforcement Unsolved Cases Major Cases at (202) 727-9009. Anonymous information may also be forwarded to the department's TEXT TIP LINE by text messaging 50411.

—Dawn Christie

MPD's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit

Since its inception in June 2000, the Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit or (GLLU) has dedicated itself to the Crime Victims Rights week theme of restoring the balance of justice in serving the GLBTQ communities in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area.

The Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU) is a team of dedicated officers and volunteers that focus on the public safety needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities. The primary focus of the GLLU is to gain the trust of the community and seek out information that leads to the closure of hate crime and violent crime within the GLBTQ community. The GLLU officers not only conduct patrol functions, they respond to citizen concerns. This specialized unit is

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Washington, DC 20001

Office Location
1369-A Connecticut Avenue, NW (Dupont Circle)
The entrance is on the Massachusetts Avenue side of the SunTrust Bank. The office is accessible by Metro Rail (Red Line) and bus.
Phone: (202) 727-5427
Phone: (202) 347-8164 (TTY)
Fax: (202) 724-4120
Email: GLLU@dc.gov

Additional GLLU Resources
The DC Center for the LGBT Community (202) 682-2245
2000 14th Street NW, Suite#105 (The Reeves Building)
Washington, DC 20009

www.thedccenter.org
www.mpd.gov/gay-and-lesbian-liaison-gllu
www.glbaa.org/archive/2000/mpdglu0621.shtml

also tasked with conducting public education and safety awareness campaigns on issues related to hate crime and public safety. The GLLU office although stationed in Dupont Circle, NW, its officers are out in the community conducting outreach citywide to ensure that all victims of crime are serviced.

—Helen Hall

Letters & Kudos

Share your story

Send a letter detailing your experiences — positive or negative — to victim.services@dc.gov or send via US Mail to:

Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street SW, WDC 20024

★ Happy Holidays - Marlene Castro

I know that this holiday is a very sad one for our family, and the Metropolitan Homicide Unit Victims Branch is there for our family and others. My family would like to say thank you again for everything that everyone did for my son Robert Delhawn Blythe Jr. and our family. We will always be thankful for the support that everyone gave us. Robert's 5 children will know about all the help and support everyone there gave us.

★ Let our souls
be filled with gladness
as we celebrate
God's gift of everlasting life
this blessed holiday season.

Thank You
The Blythe Family

Thanks Megan Peace + Blessing
Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year 2014
to you + your family
Always in our Prayers,
Heart & all your hard
work that you do for
us
The Jackson Family

Alisa D Jackson - Gray
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